101 It is interesting to compare these two monosyllables with the Peul [Fulani] word bal, which also means "black" and which can also be spelled ba since its final l, like the n' in ban', is merely euphonious. The comparison is valid because Peul is by origin a Negro language native to the area and, further, because a comparative study of the Sudanese dialects has shown much mutual borrowing of words.

From all this I conclude that the term Bambara and its variants likewise signify "black men."

Further, foreigners and their half-caste or naturalized offspring, all of whom we include under the name Peul, ruled over western Sudan in early times, and it is reasonable to suppose that the name Bambara dates from that period and represents the name by which the Peul rulers designated the natives. [9] Or, it may be safer to say that the word Bambara and its variants derive from the same root ba, meaning "black," which came from an ancient dialect of which the modern Peul language is also an offshoot.

However that may be, the designation Bambara, which is used generally throughout western Sudan, has many meanings today. For the Moslem, the Bambara is the infidel, the pagan, the drinker of alcohol; for the pastoral peoples (Moors and Peuls), he is the farmer and also the Negro. For Semites and those who claim to be Semites, he is principally the Negro. For those who were or are rulers, he is the slave; and for all he is the primitive man who is socially inferior.

101 578 The word Bambara has shared the same fate as the word Peul in that it is used simply as an epithet: the name Bambara is applied to all pagans (1), farmers, slaves and black men. Indeed

1. "... It is absolutely certain that in the minds of Sudanese Moslems in general and of those living at the mouth of the Niger in particular, the word Bambara is applied, not to any particular people, nor to a specific tribe, but rather to all Sudanese who have remained faithful to the native religion." (Delafosse, Vol. 1, p. 126).

101 the word has so thoroughly taken on a pejorative sense that its
578 use may be a grave insult. What an insult it would be for a Moslem to be called a Bambara, i.e., an infidel, a pagan and an alcoholic!

101 In the strictest sense, however, the word Bambara is applied by the Malinké and, following their lead, by the French only to natives who speak the Bambara dialect and who call themselves Banmana or Bamana. Barring specific exceptions, we shall henceforth use the word in this limited sense in the present work.

X173 It is evident from the foregoing remarks that the Bambara belong to very ancient indigenous families; indeed, they themselves consider this to be so, and they are so considered by others.

Native informants are likely to say that the Bambara are former slaves of the Malinké; but they also say that the Somono are former slaves of the "Ségou people." Later on (see Chapter 4), we shall see in what sense [10] this slavery should be understood. It was a characteristic result of the political form of the native governments.

101 In addition to the general name given to them or accepted by them, which applies to one or another group, the Bambara are designated by terms expressing their geographic distribution. There are, for instance, those who live at Bélédougou (called Beledugu-ka-u); those in the Kaarta area (Karta-n-ka-u); those at Ségou (Segu-n-ka-u); those around Bani-n-ko (Bani-n-ko-ka-u). Each of these expressions also has a political connotation; Ségu-n-ka-u is often used for members of the ruling party, which holds power at and operates from Ségou, and only the context or the drift of the conversation will make it possible to know what people are actually being discussed.

Among themselves the various Bambara groups often describe one another by nicknames. The "Kaarta people" ironi-
[302] cally call the "Ségou people" Tlu-kene-u, "those with a single braid," because of a peculiar way of doing their hair, or Nya-ni-Nyéle-u, because Nya and Nyélé are popular names for women among the people around Ségou.

101 It is common, too, to call all the members of a clan by a
614 name derived from that of a clan founder or ancestor. Thus, the

The Patriarchal Community

428 When the fa is dead, all his property remains jointly among his legal heirs, thus constituting a patriarchal community whose investigation has two parts: the community of persons and the community of property. [173]

I. The Community of Persons

596 614 Members of the community. The patriarchal community is made up solely of the legitimate descendants of the deceased fa: immediate descendants (sons and daughters), or his descendants exclusively in the male line (descendants of his sons and grandsons).

The descendants of the fa through his daughters are outside the community since they belong to the patriarchal communities of their respective fathers.

428 596 614 If, at his death, the fa leaves no male heirs, there can be no patriarchal community; his property is divided among his daughters or, if there are none, among his brothers. If only a father or mother or some other ascendant were left, his property would go to them, or if he leaves only daughters, his property goes to them, but in either case there will no longer be a community.

848 596 614 578 Legitimacy is the necessary and sufficient condition for inclusion as a member of the community. A legitimate child is one born of a marriage, that is, of a union between two free individuals that conforms to custom. When slavery introduced concubinage into the household, however, the rule was relaxed because a free man was unwilling to have his sons slaves. In practice, therefore, maternity resulting from intercourse with a free man frees his concubine from slavery, and the children of the union become members of the community. This dangerous privilege is often contested by agnate brothers born of free mothers.

Given the diversity of conjugal bonds, ranging from marriage to free union, it is easy to imagine the discussions that

848
596 arise on the subject of legitimacy. During the fa's lifetime,
614 his authority imposes whatever solution pleases him, but when
578 he is gone, the disputes involving status are all the more violent for having been suppressed or evaded for so long.

These disputes gain strength also from the difference in
614 rank which the members have within the community. The
596 totality of prerogatives of all kinds which raise the fa above all others constitutes a kind of superior dignity whose essence is the omnipotence covered by the word faya, from which came the title fa [174] (master, lord). It is in reference to the faya that the members of the community are ranked.

[562] Only male members can advance claims to the faya, and because they can do this, they can all call themselves fa. On the other hand, women can never hold this authority; they are fantan'-u, "powerless."

Among the fa-u there are distinctions based on degree of
596 kinship and on age; those most closely related to the fa will be
614 the first to receive the honors about to be described. Male
601 descendants in the first degree form a sort of senate of which
561 the eldest is a kind of president-by-birth; he is truly the fa, the actual representative of the deceased. The one immediately following him by rank in terms of age is his syere (follower), his heir presumptive at the head of the community. The other senators, usually brothers of the fa, are uncles (bina-u) to the descendants of the second degree and their children. By reason of the authority associated with the position of bina-u in the community, this kinship term has come to be a title of respect which is bestowed on men toward whom one wishes to show particular esteem (1). Because of their age,

1. It is worthy of note that in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Miss Stowe explains that among the slaves in America the word "uncle" had precisely this meaning as a title of respect and honor.

all the senators of the community are commonly called koro-u, "the elders," and the fa is first among them.

596 deprived of his rights, he and subsequently those who would
614 represent him; the branch of the family of which he is head is henceforth dead so far as the family is concerned.

In the second place, no member of the community
[848] attains the faya unless he fulfills certain conditions, of which the first are legitimacy and primogeniture.

The fact that the claimant is a member of the com-
[578] munity implies that he is legitimate. Since it does happen, however, that the question may not have actually been investigated or, by the wish of the fa, not even been raised, the legal heirs who would be injured and intriguers who seek any pretext -- and there are always some of these persons -- raise the question, and infinite complications often follow.

Primogeniture is equally subject to challenge, and the opposition everywhere finds it a convenient motive for their
[595] machinations. It is, indeed, understandable that in polygamous households, with the wives sometimes residing in various places apart from the husband, simultaneous or at least close births give rise to disagreements as to which son was in fact the first-born.

Finally, even though he may actually be the eldest legitimate son, the claimant may find himself passed over because of measures taken [176] against him by the late fa. It appears that although custom favors the eldest legitimate son, it yields to the expressed wishes of the fa if the senate agrees to his rejecting the candidate. This is a grave step and one which may lead to the most violent reactions.

This raises the question of whether special talents or aptitudes should be required of the claimant, over and above those of legitimacy and primogeniture. For example, can he be required to be healthy, active, and a good administrator? It appears that the senate may choose to eliminate a person it deems unworthy. This applies particularly to a free man who has voluntarily fallen from that state by living like a caste member or a slave. By this behavior he has already excluded himself from the community, but it sometimes happens that his actual exclusion has not been noted or announced before the question of accession to the faya arises.

596 614 Most often, however, the debates are concerned either with legitimacy or with primogeniture, and it is by no means rare for a fa, before his death, to insist that the one chosen be the one designated by custom and to threaten to call down curses on anyone who should try to bypass him or to reject his authority (1).

1. Ngolo and Ma-n-son both acted in this manner, according to the chronicle of Ségou.

In associations which have adopted a community organization analogous to that of the family, the election of a head is determined solely by these factors. It may be concluded that these are the bases consecrated by custom and that any other arrangements can only result in the worst kind of disagreement.

567 578 596 614 There is confirmation for this. Where slaves are numerous and well organized, they may refuse to recognize the new fa and choose another from among the members of the community. They may even decide to give themselves to a foreign master on the pretext that the fa imposed upon them by custom does not meet with their approval. This is a disaster which jeopardizes the wealth, strength, and even the unity of a family, for it can happen, in order to deal with the crisis, that a compromise is made which more or less ignores the regularly designated fa. This results in wrangling which usually ends with a schism in the community.

The history of these countries tells of many such cases, [177] because the slaves, upon becoming powerful, made the law in the families. The chronicle of Ségou thus relates that the slaves belonging to Dina Wara gave themselves to Biton upon the death of the former. It goes without saying that endless intrigues always precede such defections. The really successful fa, such as Biton, earned their reputations as able politicians and increased their fortunes precisely by their ability to avoid such disasters in their own communities, while stirring them up elsewhere. [662]

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[577] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

[763] Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

596 and property. On the other hand, he also has duties toward
614 them, for it is the essence of the institution to support its members.

561 All the acts of the fa, even the arbitrary ones, are,
according to law, under the control of the senate. It should
● 578 not be forgotten that the members of the community are di-
596 vided into two hostile groups: that of the "elders," which in-
614 cludes the fa, and that of the "young masters." The fa could hardly [184] keep the common property all to himself, so he shares it more or less as he pleases, and naturally, the elders are among the most generously treated. The young men seldom get any such favors, hence their resentment against the elders, due largely to envy of their favored position.

596 It is customary for a fa when he becomes the head of a
614 patriarchy to leave the management of his own community to his eldest son (1). This separation of interests is essential in

[554 492]

1. The eldest son, or better, the first-born son, thus occupies a privileged position, and in Kaarta he is usually provided with a white horse to make him conspicuous. See p. 122 about the death of 98 first-born sons mounted on white horses.

order to prevent the fa from despoiling the patriarchy to benefit his own community. The history of these countries shows how often this rule is broken by ambitious men who hope to profit by the general confusion to build up a considerable fortune. Among both the elders and the young men they find willing accomplices, and as their power increases, they extend their extortions. There are many signs, however, of the fragility of their despotism, which they themselves recognize. They usually, therefore, take pains to settle the question of succession in advance hoping to avoid the collapse of their achievements. Wasted effort! Custom, which they have ignored, regains its rights when they die and often does so during their lifetime. This is a logical explanation of the fact that

421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

595 she herself urges her husband to take another wife who will share some of the housework and relieve the situation. As a result, polygamy in this form resembles an association in which, through division of labor, each person seeks to provide his own support and to contribute to the general welfare.

Second marriages are identical with first marriages except that they are celebrated with somewhat less ostentation. Furthermore, a married man is more independent of his community in the material sense, and sometimes he is likewise more independent of the wife.

II. Other Types of Conjugal Union

588 595 Besides marriage there are innumerable kinds of conjugal unions, such as agreements between capable individuals, that at times have legal consequences, some of which are even extensive. All these kinds may be grouped as two types: concubinage and free union.

595 Concubinage. This is a union in which at least one of the parties is a slave. It is very common for a master to treat one or more of his slaves like wives. Some men like the arrangement because it does away with all the difficulties arising from the bride price and the often exasperating involvements with an affinal family. Concubinage practiced by a free man has the disadvantage, however, of [205] his children being his slaves, since children retain their mother's status. It is true that this custom has been circumvented. It is accepted that the female slave is regarded as free once she has borne a child to a free husband and he has recognized it. This, however, does not erase the original stigma; children borne of free wives always [578] consider themselves superior to their siblings whose mother was a slave. Family tensions arise out of this, which become acute upon the death of the fa.

Concubinage, practiced on a large scale by free men, has, indeed, perverted all the communities. Polygamous households have had grave difficulties because the wives, being different in rank and yet forced to live side by side, have sacrificed everything to their resentments and hatreds.

88| and friends have kindly lent for the occasion, they advance
301 shyly. In some areas, notably in the Bani region, they wear bundles of cowries, from the bride price already paid for them, around the hips and hanging on each side of the head (1).

[302 171]

1. Bambara girls who have gone through the soli have their heads shaved. Among other peoples, on the contrary, girls have their hair braided like women for the first time, but to the braid is added a tuft of the hair shaved off seven days after birth; this hair has usually been lost, but a small tuft is made to simulate it.

88| Boys and girls, following the old women who lead them,
[535] dance around the orchestra, and then all sit down in a circle. The nyana-n-son-na-ba takes the floor. He speaks in a low voice, and, as is proper, his words are repeated in a loud voice by a herald. He proclaims the end of the soli, recalls its principal events, and indicates clearly which children have participated in the rite; each boy and girl is specifically named. He will also be sure to point out that the soli is an immemorial custom among the Bambara and that there is no worse insult than to
●[578] treat a Bambara as uncircumcised. He closes by inviting everyone to eat, drink, and celebrate in the joy and harmony appropriate to such a festival.

[535] Dancing is resumed, and the boys and girls of the soli take part. The festivities continue as long as the refreshments last, usually several days.

To end it all, no one leaves without giving at least a few kola nuts to the heroes of the festival, the boys and girls.

The last phase is the thanks given by the soli-ma to those who assisted at the da-woro. In noisy bands, boys and girls dash about the village in two distinct groups. The girls' group is headed by the soma-moso who is called masa (queen), followed by the masa-ma-kono (vice-queen) and the masa-ma-kono-segere [248] (follower of the vice-queen); the last girl in the

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goat," and, indeed, that describes the appearance of the little bunch of roots. It is possible that the word Ba-ku is merely the profane name and that the real name of the nyana is kept secret.

claims eminent rights over every person or thing it touches, as a consequence of the supernatural power of the nyana protecting them. [268]

So it is that the brotherhood, by what might be called divine right, comes to play a political role which is inconsistent only because it was not designed to play such a role. Let an ambitious man come forth, one who knows how to make use of the organization and its redoubtable power for his own ends, and the brotherhood then becomes the cradle of a veritable political state.

So it is that when the regular authority cannot firmly resist its encroachments, the brotherhood becomes a kind of high judge and uses that high office to establish a reign of terror which exploits the defections due to hatreds its own machinations have aroused and encouraged. This wretched [578] game naturally brings repercussions within the brotherhood itself: the nyana-den' are at each other's throats, and the grimmest dramas accompany the indulgence of the lowest instincts. The chronicle of Ségou bears witness to these facts.

It is, unfortunately, by no means unusual for the established authority to condone these crimes through weakness, interest, or membership in the brotherhood. As a result, innumerable regions have fallen into anarchy.

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That is why and how the brotherhoods have been the cause of a great deal of unrest in the native milieu. As a refuge for escaped slaves, malcontents, vagabonds, intriguers, in a word, for all enemies of public order, the brotherhoods everywhere set themselves up in opposition to regularly constituted authority, and when they are unable to take it over, seek to thwart it by taking the head into partnership.

The dynastic convulsions of most of the Sudanese empires, especially that of Ségou, are in large part explained by the usurpations of these great brotherhoods of nyana.

794 The family, too, has been assailed, perverted, [269] 182 and disorganized, because dissident elements found support in 578 the brotherhoods that made it possible for them to combat their "own people" in the communities and sometimes even to bring about their downfall.

Moreover, within the community, they set up the cult of nyana of the boli in opposition to the cult of the manes. In associations of communities, the nyana dugu-da-siri has been gradually abandoned in favor of these imperious and jealous nyana of the boli. Although the latter could not entirely eliminate the former because of their failure to appropriate the rights over the land, they have nevertheless eclipsed it by their all-encompassing authority. So it has come about that nyana of the boli have been created who are honored as protectors of the citizens, although they do not own the soil.

It is remarkable that these destroyers of the natural family always seek to organize themselves as artificial families by taking on certain characteristics of the family: communities of inalienable spiritual and temporal property; communities of the dead and the living; the cult of the manes of the high priests, etc.

It is the secular action of these laboratories of magic that has most strongly shaken the foundations of native society. Only a strong power could contend with them effectively, and such a power has seldom presented itself. Islam has often been their implacable enemy and yet has actually strengthened them by introducing a knowledge of oriental occultism.

3. Some Important Brotherhoods

794 The cult is the essential framework of all the brotherhoods. One must know its principal characteristics in order to understand the organization and operation of any brotherhood. Each nyana has its special cult, characterized by particular traits, of course, but these differences do not change the basic elements in which all cults of nyana resemble each other.

Therefore, although descriptions of all the different cults would no doubt bring out an interesting variety of details,

614 421 and kept considerable property for himself. For their part, the ton'-dyon', pleased with their lot, carefully kept out of sight so as to be able to enjoy what they had been given and what they had managed to add to it.

These usurpations tended to become stabilized through inheritance, although not without dreadful disturbances.

614 *173 After Mamari, the office of fama was handed down within his family until the day when the assembly of the ton'-dyon', dissatisfied with Dékoro's regime, decided to "change the seed," a quaint metaphor for the clan's determination to have a more amenable fama.

The ease with which Dékoro was eliminated (and others after him) also shows that the fama was, and after all could only be, what the ton'-dyon' allowed him to be. This makes it clear that the spirit [309] of the fla-n-ton' never died; the fama merely appeared to be more than primus inter pares at times when his personal influence temporarily made him master of the situation.

At such times, then, he may have governed without the opposition of the majority, but such a period of dominance has always been personal and temporary. In reality, dissension was ever present and was made manifest in fratricidal quarrels, during which the fama seemed to be principally concerned with gratifying personal grudges. [578]

The chronicle shows us that the fama was at the mercy of the ton'-dyon'; without them he could do nothing. The Monday and Thursday meetings, which were a condition of his authority, continued for a long period of time. In any event, this assembly (furu-ba) was the whole of the clan. In ordinary times, the assembly was stimulated by the pleasure of drinking the beer which the fama, like the ton'-tigi before him, always provided. Worship of the clan idols was also the occasion for some of these meetings, accompanied by eating and drinking. The fama invariably made every effort to use these gatherings, usually disorganized, to further his own interests as well as those of the clan.

When Mamari's authority was well established, these meetings no longer played any deliberative or even consultative role, except in the gravest circumstances when the very existence of the clan was at stake. It was logical that the council of the

614 dyon'-kuntigi should replace them; the dyon'-kuntigi always
*173 exercised an influence over the ton'-dyon' for whom they acted as spokesmen. Besides it was easy to convene the dyon'-kuntigi, and as their experience increased, they came to be competent and tried collaborators for the fama.

As time went on, however, the council was neglected. The extension of the to-da kept the important dyon'-kuntigi away from Ségou, and as a result the fama became increasingly despotic. He was always sensitive, however, to the influence of his immediate circle, that is, the people of his house (his mother, wives, children, brothers, and other relatives) and
[567] especially his familiars (1). The latter constituted a kind of

1. So it was that in his fratricidal quarrel with Nyana-n-Koro, it is clearly apparent that Ma-n-son was guided by the shrewd suggestions of Nzan-fato; in his quarrel with Souleyman, his intimates were his advisers.

privy council in which the leader of the slaves, whether [310] or not he belonged to the ton'-dyon', played an important role. Ordinarily these familiars were of lowly birth: people of caste or domestic servants in the house of the fama. Deeply involved in their master's life, they were at the root of the intrigues surrounding him.

The fama realized that his authority was deprived of its strength when he lost contact with the ton'-dyon', because a clan languishes almost to the point of extinction when those who compose it lose touch with one another. Therefore, the fama would convene the assembly, not, as in the past, in order to learn its wishes, but rather to request or even require from it a solemn affirmation of loyalty before the idols. In any case, the assembly always met at least once a year to renew the oath of religious faith and to admit the "young men."

The assembly took an effective role only at the election
• [578] of a new fama, and it is plain that over the years this power of

614 consultation likewise underwent changes. In the beginning there
*173 was no great amount of dissension within the furu-ba, but gradu-
578 ally, as the importance of the clan grew and the wealth of influ-
ential members increased, divergent opinions arose, held by strong and determined partisans. Then the dyon'-kuntigi were opposed among themselves, and the recurrent periods of anarchy bear witness to the consequences of these internal quarrels.

Organization of the Clan

614 The army. The office of fama is dominated by the need
721 to ensure the prosperity of the clan since, in theory, the clan's only reason for existence is that of procuring for its members as many material satisfactions as possible.

The usual way to make a fortune among these people was through armed pillage. When a fama was elected, the bow and quiver symbolized the clan's activity, and according to the reasoning of Kanou-ba-nyouma, it was essential that the arrows should hit someone. Thus, it was necessary to go to war. That was the way to acquire slaves, by means of which the great -- and everyone aspired to be such -- satisfied their desires. That is why the essential organization in the clan was the armed force. [311]

614 This organization was based on the distribution of the
701 slaves among chiefdoms (dyon'-kuntigi-ya). Observed as a whole, the army was composed of a certain number of sections called sen' (literally, "foot"). This was not a specific unit, but merely the name used to designate an organized group under the leadership of a chief. Each sen' had a variable number of men. The bolo (literally, "arm") was a "band" made up of a likewise variable number of sen' and commanded by an important chief.

614 When the army was drawn up for battle, it faced the
726 enemy with a central mass called disi (literally, "chest") made up of the corps of sofa, flanked on the right and the left by bolo called, respectively, kini-n-bolo (right arm) and numa-n-bolo (left arm) (1). Each of these bolo were made up of furu-ba dyon'

1. Note this anthropomorphism applied to the army, which thus included head, arm, feet, chest.

422 The idea of transferable property is complex in native law.
423 The distinction between movable and immovable goods is often difficult to establish; the huts of uncertain durability are easily moved, while a Fama's throne is attached to a fixed site and cannot be considered movable.

423 Land ownership poses problems still more complex. We have seen that land is never sold. The lands have a primary owner who is the spirit of the bush or a mythical ancestor, a possessor who is the first occupant having concluded a pact with the master of the soil, and, finally, a detainer who has received the land in usufruct from the possessor. The detainer is a family head, and the field he has received belongs to his community which exploits it. But after long years of working the land, the detainer tends to consider himself the owner of it, and when he leaves it during a cycle of crop rotation, it sometimes happens that the land's possessor bestows the [578] detainer's old vacant field on a newcomer, which gives birth to interminable disputes between the old and new cultivators. We have seen elsewhere how certain plots of land particularly well-placed on river banks or near huts were meticulously [74] cultivated. These tend to become veritable private property which families hand down from one generation to the next. In addition to the family fields, there exist fields reserved to certain brotherhoods, such as the n'Domo or the Gna, the members of which work the fields to meet the needs of the cult. Finally, two days each week each community member has the right to cultivate his own personal field which is outside the control of the family. These fields take on more and more importance with the development of a sense of individualism and with it a sense of individual property.

We see, then, that land may be meted out for the benefit of family, religious, or interfamily groups, or for the benefit of individuals. Although none of the parties holding the land are acknowledged as owners, they make use of it as if they were the masters and go so far as to transmit it to their heirs.

It must be noted that a special law exists to regulate the possession of trees and the gathering of their fruits, and the trees are not necessarily connected legally to the fields where they grow. Certain trees, the home of spirits, belong to a certain family, while others, such as the karite, are common property, and their fruits belong to the collectivity.

614 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution
825 if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the
784 metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (oulou den) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a mé, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A Kouloubali would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the dondol or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a Djara calls himself the son of a lion, or a Dambélé the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala
614 of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll
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761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

761 When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one
782 may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
776 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla séra à ma, he was old and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all, even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

761 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
778 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
●578 they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
674 which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
754 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family. This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

761 therefore secretly, and good relations between the actual /50/ or sup-
578 posed culprit and the unfortunate family are not broken in anyway.
674 The strange fact that has always surprised me is that all these people
754 converse amicably, do each other small favors, invite each other to drink and eat, while in their hatred they maintain a constant guard. They watch each other as they smile -- one party to protect their lives and their interests, the other to obtain vengeance. And on the day when it is least expected, that vengeance explodes inexorably. Cases of poisoning are not unusual in the Sudan, and it is not without reason that almost every death is blamed on the korti and the dounkono. I know that many die a perfectly natural death, and I have seen dropsy brought on by syphilitic consumption stupidly attributed to poisoning by the Komo, acute peritonitis to poisoning by the Kono, dysentery to poisoning by the Nama, undue swelling of the testicles with purulent abscesses, which were consequences of misconduct, to poisoning by the Nia, an abscess in the bladder to the Douga or the Nama. But it is a definite fact which I have noted many times in the course of seven years, and which any European living among the Negores can observe, however little he knows the language, the diseases which kills the natives is contracted when they return from a market, from a festival in honor of a fetish, or from a drinking bout where d'lo flows freely. The person's kidneys are hard and painful, his stomach causes him horrible suffering, his intestines seem to be torn by thorns, and there is complete anuria. In three or four days at the most his time is up.

The administrators at the head of a circle have all had to settle these cases which touch on the question of poisoning, and I doubt if there is one who has seen the matter clearly, so difficult it is to establish poisoning by korti and by dounkono. Let us refrain from throwing a stone at them; in a similar situation we would all be at a loss, for here there are always as many guilty persons as there are innocent, and all of them deserve the rope even while able openly to claim peace, liberty, and life. Since in the eyes of the Negro the fetish alone is guilty, there is a very simple means of stopping the decimation of the population and of allowing it to grow!

881 sentence, for the headman only talks in a low voice, as is in good taste. /197/ The speech is short; he calls by name each circumcised boy and excised girl and reminds everybody that among them circumcision is as old as the world, that is to say, as old as the Bambara people. "Yes," he exclaims, "our circumcised children are on the path of their fathers; they are Bambara. Youths, young girls, men and women, old men and old women, our circumcised ones can henceforth take part in palavers, sit with their elder brothers around the gourds of d'lo, or sorghum /sic/ beer, and take part in our games, our merry-making, and our rites. May everyone know it and no one forget, or ever treat them as if they were uncircumcised (1) -- that is the

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1. To call someone blakoro ("uncircumcised") is the insult of insults.

deepest insult! Everyone will know how to avenge an insult to his child, and I will know how to avenge an insult to mine." He ends by saying: "Truce to disputes; let us eat, drink, dance, and enjoy ourselves, and /leave/ serious matters (2) /until/ after the festival."

2. All disputes, all litigation, everything that disunites.

From then on, d'lo flows in streams and throats are cleansed. Everybody, young and old, men and women, dances in honor of the young "citizens," and as long as the sparkling, foaming liquor lasts, there are songs, dances, cries and shouts without end on the public square, day and night. And when the beer reaches its end, each circumcised boy and excised girl, in order of age, stretches his or her muscles before the public, accompanied by father, mother, and all his family and that of his fiancée or her finacé. This is the climax of the festival. At this point the cries and shouts redouble, and the drinkers, jug in hand, foam on their lips, gazing into space and wavering on their legs, place beads, cowrie shells, and a kola nut in the large pockets of the blouses of the circumcised youths and

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